

FULFILLMENT



Honolulu Myohoji
2003 Nuuanu Ave.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

By Rev. Teinyo Kunugi

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Compiled by
Rev. Takamasa Yamamura
and Dan Liu

Translated by
Dean Makinodan



Honolulu Myohoji

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Preface

I feel most blessed that we are able to bring out the English translation of Rev. Teinyo Kunugi's 2017 booklet on topic of the path to fulfillment of human life. If you will accept what is written here and practice the teachings, I believe that you can live a peaceful and happy daily life.

I believe that an important matter of what is being taught here is the effectiveness of words. It is about the fact that your life will change through the words that you speak.

"Yamato no kuni ha kotodama no sakiwahu kuni (Japan is the land of abundant word spirit)." From ancient times, in Japan, it was believed that words, the energy of words (kotodama [word spirit]), leads human life to happiness. The Japanese people revered words and stood in awe of them. And they were most careful about the use of words. Yet many people do not know about the power of kotodama (word spirit) and speak unthinkingly about their worries, anxieties, sadness and things that they do not wish to experience in the future, and they are suffering in life.

I rarely use negative words. That is because I know that in words there is the power to have things become just as spoken about. We must never speak about what we do not want in the future. Speak only about the things that we wish to happen. The same is true for the English language. If you will use good English words, your life will also become a good life.

There is one portion of this booklet that I would like you to be mindful about as you read it. Near the end on the section "Yokunaru, Yokunaru," there is the statement: "When something good happens, think that it is miraculous. When something bad happens, think that it is a matter of course." The contents of this statement differ from my viewpoint. I ask that you to understand these words as being an attempt to console those experiencing suffering at the present moment.

Among the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha there are the words: "Everything is guided by the mind, serves the mind, and created by the mind." (Dhammpada, 1) From the standpoint of

the truth of human life, our lives become exactly as we envision them to be. The results in your life are the results of your way of thinking. If your life is painful at present, it was because you had envisioned in your mind such a painful human life. You might reply, "No, I had never thought about such things." In the past, you certainly must have had negative thoughts. In the past you were overly worried about the future or despaired about the future. You had spoken negatively about your future. These are some of the thoughts that you must have entertained.

It is not natural that there are many sufferings in life. It is your mind that is giving rise to them. It is not a miracle that good things happen. If your mind is bright and abundant, it is natural that good things will happen. This is the teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha. It is the teaching of the famous yoga master, Tempu Nakamura. It is the teaching of the eminent religious thinker, Masaharu Taniguchi. I ask that you read our booklet, while paying a bit of attention to the above-mentioned portion alone.

If your life is filled with suffering, those sufferings are a notice from Mother Nature. Your thinking is mistaken. Your way of life is not natural. This is what is being told to you.

Since you are a child of the Buddha, it is only natural that you are happy. It is not right for you, who are the Buddha's child, to be suffering. There are perhaps people who learn from suffering. While suffering might be a good experience for some, we should not seek suffering from our side. To the extent that we think about suffering, our life will probably become one of much suffering. Since you are the Buddha's child, you are really all-powerful. You must never forget that you have the possibility and power to change your life.

Finally, I wish to sincerely thank Dean Makinodan for his translation with deep religious faith. I am also most grateful to Dan Liu, the President of the Honolulu Myohoji Mission, and the Board of Directors for making this publication possible.

Rev. Takamasa Yamamura
Head Minister, Honolulu Myohoji Mission

The Path to the Fulfillment of Human Life—The Way of Life That Brings Forth Happiness

It Is Difficult to Be Born As a Person in This World

In September 2016, the Para Olympics were held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Those with physical disabilities participated in the competitions with artificial legs and hands, or engaged in matches with wheelchairs. I was truly moved as I watched this.

I felt that the lives of these participants, who did not succumb to their disabilities but were living most earnestly, was a life of fulfillment that brings forth happiness, and I felt like applauding them. And I felt that they took pride in having been born in this world.

Do you feel that it is a matter of course that you have been born as a human being?

That could never be the case. It is truly a blessing to be born in the world of Saha (this

world of ours, “the land of endurance.”). What is the reason for our birth?

It is to live for the sake of society, other people and world peace, and to live a happy life. Yet people are living their lives while carrying their respective luggage. There is large luggage, small luggage, heavy luggage and light luggage. There is also luggage that one could not live with without the help of others. While carrying a variety of objects and things, they might feel happiness is something that is difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, since we were born to be happy, it is by no means difficult to become happy. While being born in this world, we are being protected by various Buddhas and heavenly beings. These Buddhas and heavenly beings are always protecting us so that we may live happy lives. No matter what the luggage we carry, the Buddhas and heavenly beings will surely push us forward, if we have hope in our hearts, and advance while making effort, and encouraging ourselves while believing in our happiness. A life that is lived with prayer and the hope for the protection of the Buddhas and heavenly beings is the direct path that fulfills our life and guides us to happiness.

The Kamakura feudal government attempted to behead St. Nichiren at Tatsunokuchi. Miraculous phenomena occurred and the government was finally unable to do so. He was then exiled to Sado Island in the northern seas.

In a burial ground in Tsukahara on Sado Island, there was a temple called Sanmai-do, which was six feet square with four walls. It was a dilapidated building with almost no walls or door. While surviving through the severe winter there, the Saint wrote his foremost work, the *Kaimoku-Sho*.

“You must not doubt the lack of protection of the Buddhas and heavenly beings. You must not lament the fact that there is no peace in the world and you are beset by misfortune. The Buddhas and the heavenly beings will surely protect you.” He cries out with these words to himself, his disciples and all followers of his religious order.

Let us listen intently to the words of St. Nichiren, who overcame many hardships, earnestly make effort and strive to bring fulfillment to our lives.

Yokunaru, Yokunaru (Better and Better, Better and Better)

Just when we thought that we have recovered from the Hanshin Awaji Great Earthquake, the Eastern Japan Great Earthquake occurred. And five years later, in 2016, the Kumamoto earthquake caused great damage.

The Saha world, where we are now living, is also called the “world of suffering.”

People grieve over the fact that there are many sufferings in this world, but when you think about it, it is really a place where painful things happen.

Shakyamuni taught: “This world is a most frightful place that is filled with the sufferings of sentient beings. There is always the sorrow of birth, old age, sickness and death.” It is indeed a world of suffering.

Moreover, to live in this world, it is impossible to live alone. There is our family, our work place, society—it is impossible to live without relationships with others. And there is nothing to say that all these human relationships will go

well. Antagonisms over such things as feelings and interests arise.

Even for those who boast of their health, as their body weakens with age, they are unable to move about as they please, and they experience the sorrows of life. This is even more the case when afflicted with illness and losing the vitality to live.

There is also the possibility of meeting with an unexpected accident or disaster. Since disasters, which are the result of a natural calamity are beyond our abilities, they drive us to the depths of despair.

When we begin to think in this way, the sufferings of life are not only terrible but unlimited. And we could never have enough lives in us to bury these sufferings.

In the manner of a doll that rolls back up no matter how many times it is pushed down, no matter what disaster befalls us, we stand up again with courage in our hearts and advance to a happy life. Is there a method to achieve this?

Yes there is. *It is to live with the thinking of yokunaru* (better and better). Shakyamuni taught: “All things are impermanent.” Any suffering also does not continue forever. It is rather the case that we cling to the suffering and fail to release it, and that is why we think that it continues on and on. When we confront suffering or something unpleasant, we should turn our thoughts from them by strongly telling ourselves, “they are vanishing, things will be better and better.”

When we repeatedly tell ourselves “yokunaru, yokunaru (better and better, better and better),” we feel a sense of relief and we can see a bright light before us. The way to solve the problem unfolds. Please try this for yourselves.

About the time when St. Nichiren entered Mt. Minobu, there were many followers in Shizuoka. There was particularly an increase of the Saint’s disciples who had converted from other religions. And those disciples were enthusiastically propagating the faith. Those who were not pleased by such efforts made ungrounded accusations about them to the feudal government. The government cracked down on farmers, who were earnestly following

the Lotus Sutra, and arrested a good number of them. Three followers, including Shinjiro Atsuhara, who were leaders among the farmers, receive the cruel punishment of beheading because they did not yield to the feudal government's oppression. This is called the Atsuhara persecution.

St. Nichiren dispatched his disciples to Atsuhara, guided the followers, requested the release of the farmers and wrote an appeal. He also wrote a letter to the followers and taught them the mental attitude to overcome their hardship.

In short, he had presented them a letter called "Shonin Gonanji" (The Saint's Hardships), which was written for the followers, and was addressed "To All People." There it is written: "When something good happens, think that it is miraculous. When something bad happens, think that it is a matter of course. When hungry and suffering, teach about the world of the hungry spirits. And when it is cold, teach about the eight-winter hell. When confronted by fear, do not think that a pheasant being captured by a hawk or mouse confronted by a cat is matter

of no concern, but something that is about to happen to you.”

It is probably a fact that having many difficulties is a matter of course for our lives. When we live with this attitude, our mind is all the more prepared for whatever may come our way. “Yokunaru, yokunaru (better and better, better and better),” when we say these words to ourselves, strength wells forth from us. What is more, the Buddhas and heavenly beings will lend us their support.

Moreover, when our circumstances improve, the joy of being protected by the miraculous power from the thinking “when something good happens, think that it is miraculous” is born within us, and we feel in the depths of our mind a mental state of deep gratitude and fulfillment.

Thank You, Thank You

Have you ever worshipfully greeted the sunrise from Mt. Shichimen? This purified and worshipful mental state, from having strenuously climbed the sacred mountain and seeing the bright red sun rising above Mt. Fuji,

is a blessed feeling that cannot be expressed in words.

The feeling bubbles forth from within: “Thank you very much. I am being sustained as just one precious existence in the vast forces of nature of this great universe.”

If we are able to call forth such feelings, not only at Mt. Shichimen, but at any time, we can undoubtedly live a life of fulfillment.

The way to do so is to constantly repeat the words “thank you, thank you.”

The light of “thank you” melts despair, suffering and sadness, and brings us a sense of ease.

The light of the sun is that light that is giving life to all things in this universe. We humankind too cannot live without the light of the sun. That is why the feeling “thank you for sustaining me,” wells forth from within, when we worshipfully greet the sunrise. The light of the sunrise is the light of “thank you.” It is light of compassionate love that brings light to all lives.

“Father, thank you. Mother, thank you. My brothers, thank you. My friends, thank you. People at the work place, thank you. Customers, thank you. People of Japan, thank you. People of the world, thank you.”

“The unpleasant things that happened today, thank you. The things that I am now worried about, thank you. Illness, thank you....”

“Thank you,” when we start to say these words, there is no end to the number of times that we can say them. Here both good things and bad things are all taken together in our “thank you.”

Please try this for yourselves. A new energy will well up from you. Light will shine into your lives.

This is something that I had heard. A person who loved gardening was raising cactus. This cactus had needles that were sharper than usual. The person continued to say “thank you, thank you” to the cactus each day.

What were the results? The needles of the cactus gradually became smaller. Perhaps the worry of having to protect itself from harmful

insects vanished in the cactus because it was shining in the light of thank you. It seems that this can apply to human society.

St. Nichiren, who had been exiled to Sado Island, spent his first severely cold winter in Sanmai-do in Tsukahara. When it snowed, as a matter of course, the snow accumulated in the small building, but it also covered the Saint. While seeing his body that was covered in white snow, St. Nichiren greatly rejoiced: “Shakyamuni Buddha is covering my body in a garment of white.” Furthermore, St. Nichiren spoke of the Regent and the Lord of Sagami, who decided that he would be beheaded and later that he would be exiled to Sado Island, and Saemon Hei, who carried on the order, as being his benefactor to make him the foremost practitioner of the Lotus Sutra of Japan and a good friend.

We are living in the modern age, which is being called an age of uncertainty, confusion and continuous natural disasters. Isn't this the time for us to turn our attention to St. Nichiren, who lived with the genuine feeling of thank you? No matter what our circumstances, I believe that with the mind of thank you we can walk a path

of human life that is fulfilled in every possible way.

The training of human life is for a lifetime. And it is not only for a lifetime, but it is said that our training even continues in the other world. It is also said that our training must continue over several lifetimes. Come now, it is still not too late. Let us joyfully practice the training of “thank you.”

Daijobu, Daijobu (That's Alright, That's Alright)

In the Sagano district of Kyoto there lives Fukumi Shimura, a dyer, who is a living national treasure. One day, Nobu Oka, a poet and critic, called on the dyer's workshop. At that time Oka was shown a kimono that had been woven from string that was dyed in a beautiful sakura color. It was as though the beautiful color had absorbed him.

“Was this dyed with sakura petals?” Oka asked. Shimura answered: “The dye for this color is the rough and hard bark of the wild cherry trees, before the blossoms flower. Since the sakura

tree blooms its flowers with the entire tree, the bark, wood and sap are pink.”

Upon hearing this, Oka was so moved that he almost shook in excitement.

When seeing the sakura blossoms we are prone to focus only on the beauty of the flowers, but the sakura is blooming with beautiful flowers, with its entire heart and soul, through the whole tree. And this is the reason why we delight in seeing the blossoms. Can't we help but feel that if we too live our lives with our entire heart and soul, we can bloom with a beautiful flower of human life that is of service to the world and our fellow human beings? The matter then is what must we do to live with our entire heart and soul.

The answer is prayer. Each person is born with their own mission that was entrusted to them by heaven. It is to constantly pray so that we will fulfill the mission, entrusted to us by heaven, and that we will live a happy life. When we are praying, *confidence* and *joy* wells up from within us. That is because through prayer our soul rejoices and is filled with life. And when our soul is filled with life, the power

of action is born. The energy to move ahead also appears. When we are praying, we feel as though we are protected by the willpower of great compassion, and we feel blessed. No matter what may happen, we are embraced by the feeling of “daijobu (that’s alright).” While there are probably many ways to pray, the basic prayer is the reciting of the sacred title and the chanting of the Lotus Sutra, which is the mind of the Eternal Buddha.

As we recite the sacred title and chant the Lotus Sutra, we pray that we become happy while “living for the sake of society, other people and world peace.” While repeatedly telling ourselves “daijobu, daijobu (that’s alright, that’s alright),” let us live with our entire heart and soul. St. Nichiren summoned religious exultation in his heart at whatever circumstance. That was because he lived with his entire heart and soul. St. Nichiren tells us: “Birds and insects cry but do not shed tears. Nichiren cries but he has no time for tears.” He tells us that while these tears are his, they are the tears of the Eternal Buddha’s joy. He says that the tears are because of the Eternal Buddha’s joy. That is why the tears are the tears of sweet nectar.

In the same way that the tears of the Eternal Buddha are illuminating the world like the sun and the moon, “ours are tears for living joyously with our entire heart and soul for the sake of society, other people and world peace.”

That is why we are being told: “Followers of Nichiren, who recite the Odaimoku, illuminate the world brightly. In the same way as Nichiren, shed tears of religious exultation that bring joy to the Eternal Buddha.”

Let us not forget the thought of yokunaru (better and better), the words “thank you” and the confidence of daijobu (that’s alright), give rise to joy in our daily lives, walk the path of fulfillment of human life, and successfully live a happy life.

My Body, As It Is, Is the Treasures Stupa; the Treasures Stupa, As It Is, Is My Body

The Doctrine of Munetada Kurozumi

Munetada Kurozumi was born in 1780 as the son of a Shinto priest of Imamura-gu in Okayama City. At the age of 31 he succeeded his father's duties. Two years later, he lost both parents in the period of one week. Being overcome by grief, he contracted tuberculosis, and he realized that he had very little time to live.

On the morning of the winter solstice, when he was thirty-five, he vowed: "If I should die, I will become a deity (kami) and help those who are suffering from illnesses in this world." He purified himself and worshiped the sun. At that moment, when he swallowed the light of the sun, a feeling of cheerfulness and positive energy completely filled his chest, and energy and vitality brimmed from within his body.

Munetada worked to convey to people the heart of the Amaterasu Omikami (the Sun Goddess), who had restored his life.

He saved a great number of people during his lifetime and also trained many disciples. His basic teaching was “human beings are branch-spirits of God (Kami) and that is why they can certainly live a happy life in this world if they live with gratitude, joy and cheerfulness in their hearts.”

Tadaharu Akagi, a high-ranking disciple of Munetada, summarized his master’s teaching in a verse: “The body is a shrine, the mind is the branch-spirit of God (Kami), and the breath that enters and leaves the body is Amaterasu Omikami (the Sun Goddess).” This means that the human being himself is God (Kami); the mind is the branch-spirit of God that resides in the body; and that is why a human being possesses the worth and qualifications to be happy.

When reading this, I felt that these are the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. This was identical with the meaning of the Eternal Buddha of the Treasures Stupa.

In the *Letters to Abutsubo (Abutsubo Goshō)*, St. Nichiren taught: “The figure of those who hold to the Lotus Sutra is, as it is, the Treasures Stupa.”

The Great Spirit of the Universe and the Eternal Buddha reside within the Treasures Stupa.

Our life is a branch-life of the Great Spirit of the Universe and the Eternal Buddha, that is to say, its branch-spirit.

Namu Myoho Renge Kyo stands for the Eternal Buddha. Therefore, to chant Namu Myoho Renge Kyo is to become one with the Eternal Buddha. That is why, just as we are, we too are the Treasures Stupa.

Just as we are, we become the Treasures Stupa of the Eternal Buddha, we purify and polish our soul, which is the branch-spirit of the Eternal Buddha, we radiate our original light, and that we may successfully fulfill our allotted time on earth for the sake of society and for world peace, the chapter Beholding the Stupa of Treasures explains this truth to us.

We, who have the good fortune to chant the Odaimoku, reside in the state of “my body, as it is, is the Stupa of Treasures; the Stupa of Treasures, as it is, is my body.”

When we think about the truth that my body is the Stupa of Treasures, doesn't it feel as though our spirits are braced up? Our power to live wells up, and from within us there is born the resolve to live for the sake of others and society and for world peace.

The Hope of the Eternal Buddha

St. Nichiren created the *Dai Mandala* as the *Primary Object of Worship for All Humankind*. The words, *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo*, which are positioned at its center, are the Great Spirit of the Universe and the Eternal Buddha of the Lotus Sutra.

The hope of the Eternal Buddha is that each member of humankind will realize that they are a branch-life (branch-spirit) of the Eternal Buddha, live their respective mission for the sake of others and society, and transform human society into its original state of being the Buddha Land. St. Nichiren was always conscious of the Eternal Buddha's hope and manifested the *Dai Mandala* as the goal for humankind's life, and to join its mind with the Mind of the Eternal Buddha, he encouraged us to practice the Odaimoku faith of *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo*.



**Sunrise at Blowhole during the 2016 Service to Commemorate the Founding of Nichiren Shu.
“The light of the sunrise is the light of thank you.”**



Sunrise from Mt. Shichimen in June 2017. The most sacred mountain for the Nichiren Shu.

The Three Missions of Honolulu Myohoji

- I. To become a person that purely loves others through Buddhism.

- II. To respect all religions and all beliefs of all people.

- III. To make our joy the acts of serving others.

1. The teachings of Buddhism are simple and they belong to the people of the entire world. People want to be happy and avoid pain. There is no difference in the color of skin here. We call upon all the communities to be tolerant, to reject prejudice based on culture, color, religion or gender, and to ensure freedom and equality for people. People love others based on their self-interest. They love those who treat them well, and hate those who do not serve their interest. Regardless of their attitude toward us, we love all people. This is to love people purely.

2. If someone said, "you're wrong," we should answer, "yes, I am wrong." Religion is idealism. We, who study idealism, must not fight. We must not complain about what another had done with good intentions. A person who quarrels is not a follower of Buddhism.

3. The purpose of human life, the meaning of living, is to be of service to others, to be of service to society, to do things that bring happiness. This is the answer. Moreover, to live for the happiness of others is for ourselves to also live.

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